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Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/14 of 20 November 1997 on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic in which, *inter alia*, it took note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/462) and requested the relevant organizations, organs and bodies of the United Nations system to render all appropriate assistance that States of the zone might seek in their joint efforts to implement the objectives of the zone. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to keep the implementation of its resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986 and subsequent resolutions on the matter under review and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-third session, taking into account, *inter alia*, the views expressed by Member States.

2. Pursuant to resolution 52/14, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale dated 26 May 1998 to the Governments of the States Members of the United Nations, requesting their views on the implementation of the declaration of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. On the same day, letters were also dispatched to the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations, requesting them to submit their contributions for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General by 31 July 1998.

3. As of 30 September 1998, five Governments had replied and communications had been received from six of the organizations and United Nations bodies addressed. Those replies are reflected in sections II and III of the present report. Any further replies received will be incorporated in an addendum to the report.

II. Replies received from Governments

A. Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[5 August 1998]

1. Argentina is pleased to inform you that, in accordance with its offer at the fourth ministerial meeting held at Somerset West, South Africa, on 1 and 2 April 1996, the fifth ministerial meeting of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic will be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on 21 and 22 October 1998. The next ministerial meeting will continue developing objectives to consolidate peace in the zone and promote relationships of cooperation between the member countries.

2. With respect to the threat of pollution of the marine environment, in particular in connection with the carriage by sea of radioactive waste, Argentina would point to the measures adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In particular, it should be noted that in November 1997, the twentieth session of the IMO Assembly adopted resolution A.853 (20), which amends the code on the safe carriage of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes in flasks on board ships (INF code), and in May 1998, the IMO Maritime Safety Committee approved amendments to the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea that would make the code binding.

3. Argentina is in favour of all measures aimed at making progress in regulating the carriage by sea of radioactive wastes, in particular measures that safeguard the interests of coastal States.

4. In relation to illicit fishing activities, Argentina would recall how important it is that the States members of the zone sign the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, held in New York in 1995 (A/50/550, annex I). Argentina also considers it important to limit the double-flagging of fishing vessels and believes that the 1993 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) agreement to promote compliance with international conservation and management measures by fishing vessels on the high seas, known as the reflagging agreement, should be ratified.

5. In connection with the decision adopted at the fourth ministerial meeting of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic to request the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to study ways of assisting the region, Argentina believes that it would be desirable for substantial progress to be made during the fifth ministerial meeting to be held on 21 and 22 October 1998 in Mar del Plata.

6. In relation to promoting democracy and political pluralism, Argentina calls on the members of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) who are still occupying territory in Angola by resisting demilitarization and thus delaying implementation of the Acordos de Paz and of the Lusaka Protocol, the latter of which provides for the integration of UNITA into the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, to

implement the terms of Security Council resolution 1180 (1998). Argentina expresses the hope that the terms of the truce agreed upon with respect to the situation in Guinea-Bissau will lead to a permanent political agreement, in keeping with the highest interests of the country and future national concord. It welcomes the restoration of democracy in Sierra Leone and urges the rebels who made up the ousted military junta and the combatants of the Revolutionary United Front to comply fully with Security Council resolution 1181 (1998). Lastly, Argentina welcomes the express will of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to move forward with the transition programme towards a general election which will give rise to new constitutional authorities and commends the Government's decision to begin freeing political prisoners, thereby progressing towards full observance of human rights in Nigeria.

7. Argentina is gratified by the continued economic cooperation between the member countries of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic and wishes to increase its participation through specific forms of involvement conducive to improving the trade in goods and services.

8. During 1997 and the first half of 1998, there has been a marked expansion of the bilateral economic links between Argentina and the African member countries of the zone. We estimate that this growth will continue during the second half of 1998 and into 1999 thanks to the improved international trading position achieved by the region, the economic stabilization and liberalization processes it has adopted and the increasing involvement of the Argentine private sector in some of those countries.

9. In the area of bilateral relations with the Republic of South Africa, Argentina has signed a framework agreement on drug addiction and trafficking and an agreement on reciprocal investment promotion and protection. The signing took place during the visit by the President of South Africa to Argentina in July 1998. Also, the two countries have made progress in negotiating draft agreements on carriage by sea, on double taxation of international carriage and on health matters with a view to improving mutual access to agricultural and livestock products.

10. Argentina welcomes the signing, in Ushuaia, Argentina, on 24 July 1998, of the political declaration of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, to which the three South American States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic are parties.

11. It should be pointed out that in the South Atlantic, the colonial status of the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich islands persists, affecting the territorial integrity of Argentina. Despite the good relations that have been achieved between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the efforts which Argentina has made to promote dialogue and a peaceful and definitive solution to the Malvinas question, Argentina's commitment to respecting the way of life of the inhabitants of the Malvinas and the many calls by the international community for a negotiated solution, it has not proved possible to restart negotiations towards ending the sovereignty dispute. Argentina believes that solving this important problem would make it possible to consolidate long-lasting stability and cooperation in the South Atlantic.

B. Brazil

[Original: English]
[27 July 1998]

1. The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic represents a valuable framework for cooperation and development for the South Atlantic countries of Africa and South America. The Brazilian Government believes that there are three main areas to be further developed within the context of the zone: denuclearization of the region, protection of the marine environment and cooperation to fight against drug trafficking.

2. Brazil wishes to promote the denuclearization of the South Atlantic through the integration of the Tlatelolco and Pelindaba treaties, which together with the Rarotonga and Bangkok treaties would rid the southern hemisphere of nuclear weapons.

3. The protection of the marine environment is another relevant area of cooperation in the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. The Brazilian Government favours the adoption of a new convention on the issue, within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, that would set up mechanisms of cooperation for the protection of the marine living resources, for preventing and containing environmental accidents and for promoting both the exchange of information and concerted action in these areas.

4. As recognized by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on drug control, held in June 1998, the illicit traffic of drugs is one of the major concerns of the international community. In the specific context of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the implementation of the anti-drug initiative, formally launched

at the fourth meeting of the States members of the zone, held at Somerset West, South Africa, on 1 and 2 April 1996, has set a legal and institutional basis for the development of projects aimed at curbing the demand, production and illicit traffic in narcotics in the region.

5. The approval of a resolution on cooperation in the field of narcotics control, tabled in the name of the States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic at the fortieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, was the first step in the implementation of the anti-drug initiative.

6. The Government of Brazil is committed to continued cooperation with the States members of the zone and looks forward to their fifth meeting, to be held in Argentina.

C. Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[14 August 1998]

Panama, as a country pursuing a policy of peace and harmony in its international relations and as a signatory to all conventions that prohibit the use of nuclear weapons and all conventions on disarmament in the field of conventional, chemical, bacteriological and nuclear weapons, and firmly believing in the protection of the environment and coastal and marine resources in general, supports any measures that the United Nations may take to strengthen those objectives.

D. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

[Original: English]
[4 August 1998]

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomes the objectives of General Assembly resolution 52/14, which are to promote peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic, and wishes to draw the Secretary-General's attention to developments in Anglo-Argentine relations which have contributed to the lessening of tension in the South-West Atlantic. Cooperation continues in the forum of the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission, which has the conservation of fish stocks at the forefront of its agenda, and at the South-West Atlantic Hydrocarbons Commission where, in particular, progress is being made with arrangements for the joint development of hydrocarbons in the special cooperation area, set up by the joint declaration of 27 September 1995 between the United Kingdom and Argentina.

E. Uruguay

[Original: Spanish]
[27 July 1998]

1. The Government of Uruguay has been an active participant in activities related to the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic since 1986 when the zone was solemnly declared by General Assembly resolution 41/11. The aspirations expressed in the different international forums by the developing countries and by Uruguay in particular to see a strengthening of South-South cooperation have thus been fulfilled.

2. The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic has opened up a new horizon of cooperation between the countries of South America and Africa which fully respects the principles set forth in the declaration, and which has been developed and refined at ministerial meetings of the countries of the zone. Uruguay has always maintained an unshakeable commitment to peace, which it shares with the States that comprise this zone of peace and cooperation, in the search for the most effective ways of strengthening cooperation among the States of the region, especially in the scientific, technological, political and cultural fields. But, over and above these elements, the main tie that binds our countries together is our commitment to democracy and to the promotion of fundamental human rights.

3. The countries of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic have experienced major changes of different kinds, which have been related mainly to the strengthening of democratic processes, the consolidation of free market economies and the active participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations in all of these processes.

4. Uruguay has been actively involved in some of the processes of political stabilization in the region and has participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Angola and Liberia.

5. Uruguay believes that the Treaty of Pelindaba, which declares the African continent to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone, is one of the specific steps that have been taken with a view to making the entire South Atlantic region a non-nuclear zone, given the fact that the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Antarctic Treaty (and now the Treaty of Pelindaba) are already in force. These three legal instruments will be the main vehicles for the final elimination of all nuclear weapons, which is the ultimate aim of this type of initiative and the ultimate objective of multilateral disarmament

treaties and, in particular, of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

6. Finally, note should be taken of the achievements made in other areas related to cooperation between States of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, in particular the measures concerning the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Full implementation by all States of the zone will facilitate coordination of any measures that may be taken in the territorial space of coastal States with any conservation measures that may be taken in areas outside the jurisdiction of a State, such as those regulated by the Convention on the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources.

III. Replies received from organizations and bodies of the United Nations system

A. Department of Public Information

1. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 52/14 of 20 November 1997 was highlighted by the Department of Public Information news programmes in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Dutch and Kiswahili, for broadcasting organizations worldwide. It was also publicized through the Radio Bulletin Board. Emphasis on the subject was given by press release services at Headquarters in New York and Geneva (English and French) and by United Nations information centres and services, particularly those located in the region covered by the zone. They also publicized the resolution through non-governmental organizations and media briefings and in their newsletters. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva briefed the press on the civil war and peace processes in Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone in its press briefings. It also provided press coverage on the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament in 1997 and 1998, which dealt, among other matters, with the subject of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

2. In addition, the Department of Public Information Radio and Central News Service produced a feature programme in Spanish entitled "Antarctica fauna and the ozone layer" (Perspectiva internacional No. 209/97). Other topics covered in radio news bulletins and weekly current affairs and regional magazines of specific interest to the region included the following:

(a) Nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Atlantic;

(b) The fight against drug trafficking;

(c) Economic and trade issues of concern to the region;

(d) The effects of the El Niño phenomenon in the region;

(e) The denuclearization of the South Atlantic;

(f) Population and development in South America;

(g) Climate changes in the South Atlantic;

(h) Protection of the environment, the ozone layer, solar cooking and indigenous knowledge;

(i) The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

(j) Humanitarian assistance to Liberia and Sierra Leone.

3. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has been collecting and indexing in its UNBIS/Horizon database all United Nations documents and publications and some non-United Nations materials on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic.

4. The Department of Public Information publications focused on the topic in the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, publishing the text of the resolution and a related report.

5. *Africa Recovery*, a quarterly journal, carried the following articles:

(a) "Reconstruction a priority for Congo" (vol. 11, No. 1), followed by "Donors begin to aid the new Congo", which reported on a "Friends of Congo" meeting convened by the World Bank to discuss the most pressing construction and development needs of the country (vol. 11, No. 3);

(b) "Southern Africa luring business", a report on optimism over peace, democracy and economic progress in the Southern African Development Community, including Angola, Namibia and South Africa (vol. 11, No. 1);

(c) "Tough times ahead for Ghana", a report on economic and human development in Ghana that examined the struggles of the Government with a tough structural adjustment programme, spending on health and education, progress on privatization and gold production (vol. 11, No. 3);

(d) "Landmines inflict heavy costs on Africa", a report on programmes of demining and assistance for survivors, particularly in Angola, where 6 to 8 million mines were laid during the country's long-drawn-out civil war (vol. 11, No. 3);

(e) "Enrolment to rise in the Sahel", a report on ways to reverse declining or stagnating trends in primary school

enrolment in seven Sahelian countries, including Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea (vol. 11, No. 4);

(f) "Southern Africa shifts food strategies", a report on cereal production in southern Africa, including South Africa, Namibia and Angola, where the absence of war in recent years has led to better harvests and reduced food aid (vol. 11, No. 4).

6. The quarterly *UN Chronicle* covered United Nations activities in Angola and Liberia, while the forthcoming edition of the publication *Basic Facts about the United Nations* will highlight issues of direct concern to the South Atlantic, including details on the nuclear-weapon-free zones, peacemaking efforts in Africa and environmental initiatives, especially with regard to the oceans.

B. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

1. The work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in support of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, is mainly in the form of indirect measures to promote the development and stability of the countries that border on the South Atlantic in both South America and Africa. This support is attained through a range of projects in those countries dealing with such aspects as economic management, poverty eradication, economic and social reform, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building measures.

2. The combined effect of the projects is to support the Governments concerned in their efforts to maintain steady progress in a number of the substantive areas outlined in the preamble to resolution 52/14 and documented in the record of the proceedings of the General Assembly at its fiftieth plenary meeting on 20 November 1997. Special emphasis is given to improving the possibilities of cooperation in the areas of economic and social development. Through its Division for Social Policy and Development, the Department undertakes or has recently undertaken technical cooperation activities in the following South Atlantic countries: Angola, Benin, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

As in previous years, the main involvement of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic arises from its role under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in the enhancement of the goals of the zone and, more recently, under the guidelines contained in subsequent resolutions, in the prevention of the illegal traffic of dangerous products and wastes. In that connection, ECLAC assistance has been limited to the regular remittance of the English versions of its documents for further transmission to the coordinator of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, so as to facilitate their use by African countries. ECLAC has requested translation of the following documents issued in 1997 into English:

(a) "The Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks: a Regional Perspective";

(b) "Economic aspects of the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity";

(c) "Towards a change in production patterns: second regional meeting for the implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal in Latin America and the Caribbean".

D. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1. Through its transdisciplinary project "Towards a culture of peace", the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) undertakes a series of national programmes that seek to build a culture of peace, based on the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO, by furthering education for peace, human rights, democracy and international understanding, contributing to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence, especially against women and persons belonging to minorities, and to the promotion of reconciliation. Within that framework, a variety of activities and training courses address issues, especially through education and communication, which contribute to the prevention and settlement of conflicts,

promote values of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, and enhance the role of women in the building of a culture of peace. While supporting non-governmental organizations and associations working on peace-building, UNESCO endeavours to expand its network of chairs in human rights, democracy and peace in the countries belonging to the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. Other activities within the context of the project "Towards a culture of peace" are designed to facilitate peace-building in post-conflict situations and to reintegrate into society young people affected by conflicts.

2. UNESCO is supporting peace-building and reconciliation activities in Angola, for example, by rendering technical and financial support to the organization by the Angolan National Commission to UNESCO of the national seminar "Culture of peace for youth associations", which was held in Luanda in August 1997. The aim of the seminar was the exchange of information and experience on the role that youth can play towards national reconciliation. The final report is available.

3. UNESCO granted its patronage and gave a financial contribution to the project "The Angolan peace song". This project was initiated and executed by the non-governmental organization Search for Common Ground, which succeeded in gathering top Angolan musicians from both the Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) in order for them to write and perform the peace song. The project was symbolic, since it took a leap of faith on the part of the musicians to overcome their misgivings and take a common stand for national reconciliation. On 30 August 1997, the Angolan peace song was launched in Luanda with a four-hour concert featuring six of the musicians who were involved in the project. UNESCO gave also financial assistance to Search for Common Ground to enable them to organize the distribution and promotion of the song within Angola.

4. Cameroon, Congo, Liberia, Namibia and Sierra Leone are involved in the UNESCO special project on women and a culture of peace in Africa, working in partnership notably with women parliamentarians and peace researchers and activists.

E. World Bank

The World Bank is interested in learning about recent meetings of the countries of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic and about the discussion in the General Assembly of such topics as pollution, fishing issues, democracy and political pluralism, human rights and the cessation of fighting in Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the promotion of demobilization and social reintegration. While the World Bank does not have specific comments to make on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, it takes note of the many concerns and issues that are under discussion regarding countries in the region.

F. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

At the request of the Government of Angola, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is developing technical cooperation projects for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy, focusing in particular on the development of the commodity sector and trade expansion. The projects will build on current activities executed by UNCTAD in the field of training and capacity-building. The Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries is associated with the projects, involving also cooperation with Brazilian institutions.